

June 20, 2008

GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

ACROSS the BIG SKY

Bill would fund water projects

WASHINGTON — Rep. Denny Rehberg on Thursday announced that the Energy and Water Appropriations bill working its way through Congress contains \$9.5 million in funding for three north central Montana water projects.

The Energy and Water Appropriations bill includes \$5 million for the Rocky Boy's/North Central Montana Regional Water System, which, once completed, will serve more than 30,000 people on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation and in north central Montana.

If approved, the funds will be used for the design and construction of the intake and water treatment plant as well as placement of additional pipelines. The pipelines will eventually travel from Tiber Reservoir to Chouteau, Glacier, Hill, Liberty, Pondera, Teton and Toole counties.

The appropriations bill also allocates \$4 million for the Fort Peck/Dry Prairie Rural Water System to further construction of a water-treatment plant and allow for continued placement of water lines to people in northeastern Montana, including the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

The proposed legislation also includes \$500,000 for the St. Mary's Rehabilitation Project, to upgrade the canal system that provides water for 17,000 residents and 140,000 irrigated acres across the Hi-Line. Located in western Glacier County, the system supplies water to Havre, Chinook and Harlem.

The bill also encourages the Bureau of Reclamation to streamline funding for project construction.